Murder Can Be Fun®

No. 15 — **$1.50**

The Sinister Cult

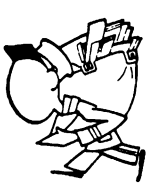
Ritual slaying of a woman for revealing Mormon temple secrets circa 1857

of Mormon

Plus

"Bloody Thursday"

at the U. S. Post Office



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OK, it's been a year. I've been busy. Among other things, I've been writing for *The Nose* and *Crimebeat*, the latter of which appears to be in its death throes. (I knew they shouldn't have made me contributing editor!) For example, this issue's kidnapping piece originally ran in *CB*, but what you'll read is considerably expanded and completely unexpurgated. Black humor isn't readily salable on the mass market these days.

When I started working on this Mormon thing months & months ago, cults were a dead topic and everyone thought Mormons were nice, boring people. There's been nary a religious whack in big, bold headlines for years. Then, of course, came Waco, TX. A colorful lot, those Branch Davidians, and good riddance, I say. (My critique of the FBI: why wait so long?) After reading about all these cracked Mormons, the only thing that surprised me about the whole thing was that David Koresh wasn't Mormon.

But the Mormon cults themselves are generating more & more ink. Since I started work on this project, a made-for-TV movie and new book came out on Ervil LeBaron, as well as another book on Jeffrey Lundgren. Mormon cults are hot. I like it. All those earnest young missionaries are going to have to develop a whole extra set of evasive answers for embarrassing questions. I think they'll take the murder stuff a lot more personally than the polygamy jokes.

Onto to my every bulging mailbag. The first item comes from a beleaguered employee of Simon & Schuster, publishers of *The Dead Girl* (skewered in #13).

> ..... another article also caught my eye, that featuring *Dead Girl's* best pal Melanie Thernstrom. I hate Melanie Thernstrom. She was obsessed with her rabbit, and would bring it everywhere. Once she left it at our offices and it escaped and was running through these august corporate corridors. People in the acknowledgements regret to this day not removing their name from the galleys. Mel's bunny-wabbit died, and she buried it in the yard of a church on Fifth Avenue across the street from her rich Grandmama's apartment. We were convinced Melanie was lying about moonlighting as a cocktail waitress, and what she modelled remains a mystery.
>
> Poor dead Bibi's family grew to hate Melanie more than we, for they tried many ways to prevent the publication of that overlong book. Melanie also collected six figures to write a screenplay of her necrophilia. She teaches creative writing at sterile Cornell, and has changed her mind, deciding not to make her next book about bunnies. (It's hard to believe he's dead.) Anyway, Melanie's whining, self-serving and unappealing personality was considerably toned down by her editor, so the book you read actually presents a much more appealing Mel-mel. Imagine if you can the reality.

Will Melanie be overwhelmed by the tragedy of it all and "gorge out"? Stay tuned for details!

One of the fringe benefits in writing the definitive article on Disneyland deaths is that you become a lightning rod for all things that are both dark & Disney. It's great. I don't think anyone can so much as stub their toe in the park without my knowing. But death is no respecter of the various corporate boundaries separating the park from Disney's other far-flung enterprises. Consider the following corespondent, currently working for a temp agency.

> ....I was sent to Disney Music (it's located in a Burbank hi-rise) to stuff envelopes for two days. I was working in this office alone, really quite happy that none of the Disney freaks were trying to make friends with me (as they are wont to do). They were, however, scuttling around the door, seemingly afraid to come inside the office, but in a very agitated, curious state. After about three hours, someone finally came in and asked how I liked working in the room, did I feel at all strange? I said no, why? They said, oh, nothing, and left. Finally, I got it out of them...
>
> It seems there was a guy who used to work in this room who had been laid off, although this term would never be used at Disney. The official story was that he was being transferred to Florida, and apparently there was an office that he was going to, but no job. This is very common where the mouse is concerned. I guess the pressure became too much for this poor fellow and one morning at 8 AM when his co-workers were coming into the office he blew his brains out. This was about a week or two earlier. I asked around and people had heard that something had happened in the tower, but it was very well hushed up....
>
> ...there are more tales to tell, there always are with Disney. I mean, the city at the center of hell in "The Inferno" is called Dis! Coincidence? I think not.

And just for the record, unless the writer states otherwise, all letters to MCBF become the sole property of the editor for publication herein and may be subject to abuse, ridicule, or wholehearted agreement as the editor sees fit. OK?

And now the tie-in. In 1989, Michael Cranson, a Las Vegas cop and a Mormon, chartered a Cessna to fly the family to Disneyland. Instead of the Magic Kingdom, however, they wound up in the Celestial Kingdom. Their plane failed to clear a peak in the Santa Ana Mountains by 100'. The ensuing fiery crash sent all ten on board to meet their Maker. And for good Mormons, that's literally.

That does it for this time. Now it's time for me to go to:... RENO! Yet another new DATEBOOK should be out in September. Still only $2.50 and as always 365 all-new, all-different morbid events, it's still a great deal. Buy an extra copy and substitute it for a co-worker's *Codependent No More Calendar*. MCBF #16 will be out sometime before I die.

Murder Can Be Fun is published occasionally by John Marr. All contents are copyright 1993 by John Marr. Sample copies, future copies, and what have you are available at $1.50 each (inquire for bulk discounts) and the indispensable Datebook is $2.50. Most back issues are still in print, although stock of the early ones is diminishing rapidly. Write for prices. The usual suspects include DC, DV, MR, CR, R/S, JP, KC, KB, KG, Keith & Jack of *The Nose*, Lulu, the PSers, the SOMBs, and all the other long-suffering souls who are sick of Mormons.

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The Bloody World of Mormon Cults

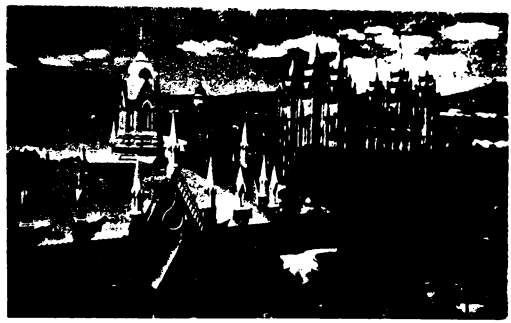
In the popular mind, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, or, as it's more commonly known, the Mormon Church, is the tapioca of religion and its members the dullest of religious fanatics. Other sects are known for colorful and distinct rituals like snake handling, speaking in tongues, or joyously crucifying one another while anointed in the Holy Spirit. Not the Mormons. Publicly, their deviance is confined to eschewing alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine, storing large amounts of canned goods in their cellars, and begetting abnormally large numbers of suspiciously well-behaved white children. Even the practices concealed from the public are more laughable than sinister -- the "secret" temple ceremonies modelled on small town Masonic lodge rites, corny special underwear ("garments") only removed for spawning purposes, vicarious postmortem baptisms and the obligatory secret names and handshake. To most outsiders, Mormonism is epitomized by its two greatest contributions to American culture: the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Donny & Marie.

But there is a flipside to these self-proclaimed Latter Day Saints. The Kingdom of Mormon is far from one big happy law-abiding spiritual family cheerfully working together to spread a vanilla gospel of brotherly love, eternal life, and spiritual salvation. There are vicious and ugly things lurking around the future Salt Lake City location of God's Kingdom on earth. On any given Monday night, thousands of Mormon families gather for Family Home Evening: a cozy LDS sanctioned ritual of filial bonding, punctuated by TV, popcorn, and a church-sanctioned lesson. But, even as most Mormon families innocently settle in for "Star Trek", another kind of Mormon family, no less devout, meets for a far more sinister purpose: to plot their next murder.

Over the last 20 years, the Mormon doctrine and the LDS Church has spawned an unprecedented number of violent religious cults and free-lance Holy Avengers. Utterly ruthless and as bloodthirsty as the most notorious Columbian drug gangs, they have launched a veritable holy war throughout the United States and Mexico. Armed as they are with guns, bombs, the *Book of Mormon* and revelations directly from God, no one is safe from this new breed of Latter Day Saint.

These aren't murders by people who happen to be Mormon. These are *Mormon* murders in every way, from the choice of victims to the modus operandi. The killer's strange and bloodcurdling beliefs, unorthodox family life, and disdain for secular authority are all firmly rooted in their faith. Although they loudly proclaim their contempt for the official LDS Church "as currently organized", their religion is little more than extrapolations and interpolations of conventional Mormon doctrine. Not that they have to stray too far afield. Mainline Mormonism is loaded with silly tenets like a sexually active God, a polygamous Jesus Christ, and a Garden of Eden just off I-70 in Missouri. The official LDS Church itself talks a pretty mean game. At a 1988 Church General Conference, Ezra Taft Benson, the current LDS Church President & Prophet, calmly announced, "God's wrath will soon shake the

Mormon founder Joseph Smith, Jr.



Temple Square, Salt Lake City, Utah

nations of the earth and will be poured out on the wicked without measure. I testify that not many years hence the Earth will be cleansed. Jesus the Christ will come again, this time in power and glory and vanquish his foes." The cults are just turning the word into deeds.

In their zeal, Mormon cults far outstrip their non-Mormon counterparts in the quantity, quality, and sheer viciousness of their crimes. Holy soldiers, self-inducted into the army of the Lord, stalk the landscape, ruthlessly cutting down their enemies. Modern-day messiahs order the cold-blooded murders of followers not quite faithful enough. Divinely inspired polygamists deliberately provoke pitched gun battles with police to bring about the resurrection of fallen comrades. Fanatical mothers, secure in the exalted position awaiting them in the hereafter, fling their children off tall buildings to their deaths. Men hand-picked by God cheerfully slit the throats of infants. Bombs explode, bullets fly, apostates vanish. And the President & Prophet of the LDS church wisely surrounds himself with more security than the President of the United States.

It usually starts with polygamy. Commonly called "The Principle", it was once standard for Mormons to marry as many wives as they could afford. This didn't sit too well with the US government, which prepared to dismember the church, seize its assets, and make membership a crime. Until God came through. An incredible 11th-hour revelation in 1890 to the official LDS Prophet banned plural marriage "in this world", saved the Mormon Church -- and gave the Mormon cults their rallying point.

Lingering suspicion over this "Great Accommodation" makes polygamy an easy sell among especially devout Mormons. Maybe they listen to a grizzled cult patriarch ranting about revelations, covenants, and "the principle" of plural marriage. Or perhaps they develop their own theology. Either way, definite historic and religious forces drive mainline Mormons into polygamy.

And, of course, there's the earthier attraction of plural marriage. Husband, bored with the marital relations, notices a cute teenager working at the Circle K. That powerful force -- is it demonic lust or divine inspiration? The basic law of polygamy is patriarches got older; new wives don't. They don't go to all this trouble just to marry middle-aged women. Almost invariably, as polygamists get older, they take increasingly younger plural wives. At an age when a Gentile man (as Mormons call all non-Mormons, even Jews) considers early retirement, a patriarch may be courting his 14-year old stepdaughter.

Plural marriage is high in the official LDS hierarchy of sin. Polygamists, no matter how sincere in their beliefs, are quickly and efficiently excommunicated from the LDS church. They're thrown out even faster than ERA supporters. Any devout patriarch serious about his Mormon faith, if not already a member of a cult, is virtually driven into one.

Fortunately for orthodox Mormons and innocent bystanders, plural marriage by itself isn't violent. With all those extra households apparently headed by single women, the preferred polygamous crime is welfare fraud, not multiple murder. Many polygamous cults have operated on the fringes of Mormondom for years without resorting to wholesale slaughter. Polygamy is really just the bait to join. Once in, it's the direct revelations from God that set the patriarchs sharpening their knives and cleaning their guns.

When a Gentile hears voices, he'll probably check into an asylum and request a dose of lithium. A Mormon says, "Aha, a revelation". These direct communiques from upstairs are considered normal, even desirable, for all worthy adult Mormon men. Luckily for the Utah homicide rate, most Mormons heed the warning that infallible revelations are reserved for the current LDS President & Prophet. Official LDS policy states that revelations to the rank & file come as easily from Satan as from God. As such, most revelations regard mundane Mormon family problems: paying tithes, sending sons on missions, packing daughters off to Brigham Young University, and so on.

But with several million potential Oral Roberts running around, someone's bound to snap. It's inevitable that some will be seduced by "the still small voice which whispereth and pierceth all things...", especially when it promises fulfillment of the ultimate Mormon prophecies. The streets of Salt Lake City are virtually littered with formerly solid, upstanding Mormons who've received revelations that they are the One Mighty and Strong, prophesied in the LDS *Doctrines and Covenants* as the one who will purify the Church and establish the Kingdom of God. Excommunicated Saints, convinced that they are the true prophet and successor to church founder Joseph Smith Jr., regularly accuse the current LDS President & Prophet of being a fraud heading a false church. Scores of budding Mormon cultists carry out divine orders to establish new sects, each proclaiming itself the "one true church of God". It's heady stuff, impossible for any true Mormon to resist.

And after the big revelation, smaller ones inevitably follow. It's as though God has nothing better to do than supervise trivial operations of minute sects. Cult leaders regularly receive divine guidance on everything detail of the operation, from money to membership to sex. But more importantly, they are instructed in how to deal with apostates, backsliders, and other assorted agents of Satan and enemies of Zion. And the divine solution is simple, neat, and direct: kill them.

Revelations don't just name victims. As holy men, cult leaders seldom need to sully themselves with plotting a murder or wielding a sword. The Lord usually selects an underling as the killer and presents a fully thought-out scheme, complete with such helpful tips such as "shoot him in the back of the head until he is dead." The plans would do a Mafia hitman proud.

And the cultists see nothing peculiar carrying out programs of divinely-dictated bloodshed. The Mormon God, as portrayed in *The Book of Mormon* and other sacred Mormon writings, is a heavy-handed fellow prone to dealing violently with the evil and the wicked. And, He has already granted all Mormons the divine version of a double-O license to kill: blood atonement.

Blood atonement is an old Mormon doctrine dating back to the

polygamous days on the Utah frontier. Brigham Young, the LDS prophet who led the Mormons to Utah, outlined the practice in a series of blood curdling sermons back in the 1850s. The basic premise is that certain sins are so inherently loathsome in the eyes of the Lord that they may only be "atoned" by copiously shedding the perpetrator's blood. Indeed, if the sinner was aware of this, he'd quite willingly submit. It's his only chance to make the Celestial Kingdom, the top level of the triple-tiered Mormon hereafter wherein deserving Saints evolve into gods themselves. Otherwise, he may find himself trapped for eternity in the Terrestrial Kingdom, with backsliding Mormons or (heaven forbid!) the Telestial Kingdom reserved for the unsaved Gentiles. Given this horrid fate awaiting the sinner, the atoner is in fact doing the atonee a favor! Young himself described blood atonement as "the way to love mankind".

In practice, this "tough love" approach to salvation means a bullet to the head and/or a knife across the throat. Not surprisingly, decapitation was an officially sanctioned form of capital punishment in Utah until 1888.

A blood atonement fad swept Utah in the 1850s. It peaked with the 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre, when a group of Mormons and Indians lovingly sent 120 California-bound Gentiles straight to the Telestial Kingdom. Today, of course, the LDS Church has backed off blood atonement as official policy. But belief among the rank & file remains widespread. Take the devout, non-cult Mormon father of Mark Hoffman, the Mad Mormon Bomber. His paternal advice: "If Satan got hold of you, son, and you've committed these acts, you should confess and ask for the firing squad so you can be with us in the next life." Utah's condemned criminals have their pick of lethal injection and the firing squad -- remember Gary Gilmore? Of the other 49 states, only Idaho, with its large Mormon colony, retains official firing squads.

A long list of sins, ranging from murder to miscegenation to using the Lord's name in vain, call out for blood atonement. During his final Utah prison term, irrepressible blood atonement advocate Ervil LeBaron petitioned the Utah governor for the firing squad to atone for masturbating in his cell. But the cult's current prime targets for blood atonement are the courageous few who decline entrance into the cult's Kingdom of God, and those foolish enough to turn apostate and quit. In cult eyes, declining membership is equivalent to signing one's own death warrant and quitting the moral equivalent of suicide. Ervil LeBaron's followers literally littered northern Mexico and the western US with the atoned corpses of their former comrades. Like such secular institutions as the Mafia or the Rolling Stones, few leave Mormon cults and live.

The outlook for the future is grim. The cults have nowhere to go but up. For a devout Mormon, it's only a short theological step from the LDS Church to the cults. And the rapidly approaching year 2000 can only mean one thing to literally-minded *Book of Mormon* readers: millennium! In the Mormon latter days, all hell will break loose, with famines, earthquakes, and wholesale slaughter of the wicked. It culminates in a massive Gathering of the Saints who will triumphantly redeem Zion. Inevitably, cults and their like-minded brethren will start descending on Salt Lake City as the '90s run out, eager to fulfill their faith's ultimate prophecy. And woe to anyone who gets in their way.

It's the Mormon Helter Skelter. And it's coming down fast.

Faster Mormon! KILL! KILL!

A Panorama of Mormon Killers, Kidnappers, Con Men and Child Molesters

ERVIL LEBARON: Ervil LeBaron was the Bambino of blood atonement. Since founding his Church of the Lamb of God in 1971, Ervil and his followers have more than earned their title as the "Mormon Manson Family". They have cut a grisly swath of blood atonement stretching from Mexico through Utah to California, claiming at least 20 -- and possibly as many as 40 -- victims. Many of their enemies simply vanished without a trace. No one was ever convicted of most of the killings attributed to the cult. Unlike most murderers, the Lambs of God were good at it.

Not too surprisingly, the roots of LeBaron's blood-thirsty frenzy reach back directly to the founder of the LDS Church, Joseph Smith, Jr. Ervil's great-grandfather was the official Patriarch of the LDS church and a personal friend of both Smith and Brigham Young. Ervil and his brothers believed that Smith had blessed their grandfather as "God's Secret Prophet", and they keenly vied to inherit this "mantle".

Things got rolling in Mexico in 1955 when Joel LeBaron announced he had the mantle and founded the Church of the Firstborn of the Fulness (sic) of Times. Most of the brothers fell in line, including Ervil. Although the Firstborns preached a mean line (they were checked out for possible involvement with the JFK assassination), for the most part, they kept their knives sheathed and guns holstered.

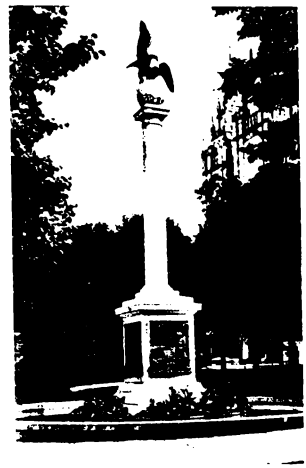
Ervil gradually grew dissatisfied with this wait&see approach and tried to take over. Joel retaliated by excommunicating him. With a handful of followers, Ervil started his own Church of the Lamb of God in 1971 to institute a bloody Mormon concept called "God's Civil Law". Joel was their first victim. Daniel Ben Jordan, Ervil's #1 lieutenant, beat him senseless with a chair leg and shoved a gun in his mouth to complete the blood atonement.

Ever since, the Lambs have pursued their bloody campaign against the enemy with unmatched ferocity. No respecter of family ties, Ervil unhesitatingly ordered the murders of his own pregnant daughter and two of his 13 wives.

Ervil was finally convicted of conspiracy in 1980 and sentenced to life. After a brief but colorful prison stay, highlighted by an attempt to drown himself in a toilet, he died of a seizure in 1981. But, just as the lynching of Joseph Smith in 1844 didn't stop the LDS Church, the death of their charismatic founder did nothing to still the Lamb's righteous wrath.

In prison, Ervil completed his final work, *A Book of New Covenants*. Besides the usual Mormon ranting and raving, there was a lengthy hit list, ranging from renegade and apostate former Lambs clear up to the top of the LDS hierarchy. The

Pioneer View Monument
Where Brigham Young said, "This is the Place"



Sea Gull Monument, Salt Lake City
(It really is the state bird)

remaining faithful took it as scripture. As recently as 1989, the Lambs were still actively blood atoning the wicked listed in *A Book of New Covenants*.

A few of the highlights of the Lambs of God's hit list:

Los Molinas Raid, 1974: From the beginning, the #1 man on Ervil's hit list was brother Verlan, who took over for fallen Joel as head of the Firstborn. Looking for Verlan, eight heavily armed Lambs drove through a small Firstborn colony in Baja California, shooting and throwing Molotov cocktails. They managed to kill two people, injure 13 more, and destroy 11 buildings. Unfortunately, Verlan was in Nicaragua at the time.

Rulon Allred, 1981 -- Allred headed the Apostolic United Brethren, a large peaceful Salt Lake City polygamous cult. The plan was to blow Allred away, who'd earned the Lamb's wrath by refusing to submit to Ervil, and then nail the ever elusive Verlan at Allred's funeral. Part one went fine -- a pair of female Lambs strolled into Allred's office and blew him away, although the blood atoning headshot missed. But at Allred's funeral, the police, wisely suspecting more cult activity, put on such a show of force that the second Lamb hit team was scared off.

Ervil was convicted of conspiracy. Neither gunwoman was ever convicted, although one later admitted her role in a book. She was subsequently served summons in a wrongful death suit while flogging her book on the "Sally Jesse Raphael Show".

Daniel Ben Jordan, 1987: Ervil's former right-hand man who pulled the trigger on the Lamb's first blood atonement, Jordan eventually left the cult to live as a independent polygamist with his dozen wives. Of course, no one just leaves the Lambs of God. On family hunting trip to the Manti La Sol National Forest in central Utah, Jordan was shot at the campsite. The first bullet, fired at close range, hit him in the chest. A second shot, point blank to the head, completed the blood atonement.

The 4 O'clock Murders, 1988: June 27, 1988 marked the 144th anniversary of the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, Jr. at the hands of an irate Carthage, IL mob. And the Lambs of God celebrated in style. In an incredible trio of synchronized attacks, three former Lambs listed in *A Book of New Covenants* plus an 8-yr old girl, were gunned down virtually simultaneously at three different Texas locations. All four were killed between 4:00 and 4:05 the Houston- and Dallas area attacks. Two of the men (one of whom brought his daughter along) were lured into virtually identical ambushes; the third was shot sitting alone in his office. Needless to say, each victim received at least one

headshot.

In a replay of the Allred funeral, the police showed up in force to the quadruple service. They even shut down the interstate for the funeral procession to make its way from the church to the cemetery unhindered. They weren't taking any chances with the Lambs of God.

RON AND DAN LAFFERTY: Ron and Dan Lafferty belonged to the "School of Prophets", a Genola, UT, Mormon cult patterned on the early LDS Church. Three of their other four brothers were also members. But it was Brenda Lafferty, the wife of the sixth brother, that started the Laffertys on their blood atonement spree.

Among other orthodox and unorthodox Mormon beliefs, the School of Prophets emphasized revelations and plural marriage. Brenda did not approve of this latter practice. Not only wouldn't she let her husband Allen join the cult, she talked her sister-in-laws out of letting their husbands take plural wives. She even helped Ron's wife file for a divorce.

God was evidently displeased. In March 1984, Ron received a revelation ordering Dan and himself to blood atone four people, including Brenda and her 15-month old daughter. They innocently told their fellow Prophets of their plans and asked the congregation to consecrate their weapon. Their brethren were sufficiently shocked to toss the pair out immediately. Oddly enough, none of the horrified cultists seems to have bothered to warn the victims or call the police.

In June, Ron and Dan broke into Brenda's apartment and dutifully slashed her and her baby's throats. In their faith, the Laffertys found the strength and solace to deal with this overwhelming tragedy. Was Allen Lafferty, the husband and father of the victims, torn by grief? On the contrary. He would have been glad to do if it had been his revelation as "my wife's life and my daughter's life were required by the Lord." And was knife-wielding Dan wracked with guilt over brutally killing his own infant niece? "No problem," he would later comment. "It was easy."

Risking God's wrath, Ron and Dan reneged on the other two names on their hit list and took off on a cross country spree. Along the way, they obediently followed revelations commanding them to smoke pot, hire hookers, and raise a stake for a new church on the gaming tables of Nevada. They were arrested in a Reno buffet line.

JOHN SINGER: The *L.A Times* quite accurately described German-born John Singer as a "hard headed, pistol-packing, polygamy practicing racist". Unlike other Mormon cultists, Singer wasn't evangelical. He primarily wanted to be left alone -- entirely alone. Unfortunately, this wasn't to be.

A self-styled polygamist, he married his first wife in 1963, and added a second in 1978. By then, he had been excommunicated for refusing to acknowledge the LDS President as the Prophet. He lived with his wives and their children on a farm with their seven children outside Kamas, Utah.

In 1973, enraged by textbooks which accorded Martin Luther King equal stature with white icons like George Washington and Betsy Ross, he had pulled his children out of school. Extreme, but hardly un-Mormon. Until a 1978 revelation said otherwise, the official LDS policy on blacks was that they were afflicted with "the curse of Ham" that rendered them beyond salvation and ineligible for full church membership.

Singer started homeschooling his children, but not especially well. When they screwed up on achievement tests, he refused to let the school district continue to monitor his program.

The ensuing truancy conflict culminated in a 18-day siege in 1979. After carefully planning their move, 10 cops on snowmobiles surrounded Singer when he came out for his mail. He pulled a gun, but before he could shoot, they blew him away with shotguns.

Singer's killing was massively unpopular in certain unidentified circles. An investigation was launched. Several state leaders received death threats; the Utah Attorney General even took to packing a pistol and wearing a bullet proof vest. Nothing ever came of these threats. But Utah hadn't heard the last of the Singer clan.

ADAM SWAPP (aka SINGER PT. II): At 18, Adam Swapp was intrigued by polygamy and the message of the Mormon cults. The television coverage of the 1979 Singer confrontation captivated him -- especially the footage of Singer's 15-year old daughter, Heidi. Swapp dropped out of school to be near the Singer ranch and contrived to meet her. A year later, they were married. Two years later, the budding patriarch also married his 14-yr old sister-in-law.

Bitterness over the shooting of this dynasty's founding patriarch hung heavy over the farm. Finally, in 1988, revelations ordered vengeance. Swapp opened the campaign by blowing up the local LDS stake house with 70 pounds of TNT. A note left behind declared the blast to be "symbolic of what is coming. There will be a collapse of church, state, and nation."

The police played into Swapp's hands and once more surrounded the polygamist compound. This time these renegade Saints wanted a shoot out. Revelations promised that a gun battle would bring about the resurrection of their beloved martyred patriarch, John Singer.

The police, stung by criticism of the Singer shooting, tried a kinder, gentler approach. After a 13-day stand-off, they tried to sneak up on Swapp and his brother with attack dogs. The brothers opened fire and killed a dog handler. The cops shot back and wounded Swapp.

A few hours later, after more gunfire but no more casualties, the cult surrendered. The house held a small arsenal of guns and explosives, and the entire family was armed. Even Singer's 21-year old son, crippled from a logging accident, had a gun mounted on his wheelchair. Swapp, his brother, Singer's wife and her crippled son were all convicted of various charges. And John Singer remains unresurrected from his domain in the Celestial Kingdom.

DAVIDS/LONGOS: Unlike most Mormon cultists, Bruce Longo wasn't born and bred Mormon. But when missionaries knocked at his family's door in Yonkers, NY, he threw himself into the Mormon lifestyle "150%". He attended Brigham Young University, did a mission, got married, moved to Salt Lake City, and started a family.

Unfortunately, Longo wasn't the most stable of personalities. His "spiritual growth" took the path of increasing fanaticism so familiar to cult watchers. After numerous clashes with LDS authorities, he was finally excommunicated in 1969 after demanding that the LDS Church turn the tithes over to him. He responded to this spiritual slight the only way a devout Mormon could: he started his own cult.

Rechristening himself Immanuel David and his wife Rachal (sic) David, they moved to Manti, UT, and gathered a small following. In typical cult fashion, Immanuel liked to carry around a sword and claim that anyone who saw it unsheathed would die immediately. He was prepared to "lop off thousands of heads" if necessary. Fortunately for the locals, it wasn't.

In the mid-70s, leaving their followers in rural Utah, the Davids moved to Salt Lake City to live the cult version of the high life. For most of their stay, they lived in an $89/day suite at the International Dunes Hotel. Immanuel paid the rent daily with a crisp new $100 bill. The family went in for expensive clothes and food. Immanuel even ordered a pair of $47,000 pianos for the suite.

For all this high living, Rachal and their seven children never talked to outsiders and seldom emerged from their suite. Indeed, some of the hotel staff didn't know there were kids. Immanuel compensated for this by playing the cultist about town.

A favorite pastime was hanging out in front of LDS headquarters, claiming he was the rightful Prophet and had the golden plates from which *The Book of Mormon* had been transcribed .

But all good things must past. In August '78, things fell apart. The cult had been the target of an FBI investigation. Evidently, their seemingly inexhaustible supply of money wasn't manna from heaven, but the fruits of an extensive campaign of burglary and interstate wire fraud run by the underlings back in the Utah outback. Indictments loomed. Rather than unleash his sword on his tormenters, Immanuel borrowed a pick-up and gassed himself by running a garden hose from the tailpipe into the cab.

Rachal took it extremely hard. The day after she heard the news, she herded

her children onto the 11th floor balcony and evidently told them to jump. Witnesses reported that after she threw her 6-yr old over the railing, the other six, ranging in age from 8 to 15, leaped without any apparent argument or struggle. She had thoughtfully stacked chairs to help the youngest ones clamber over the railing. After having thus successfully discharged her maternal duties, Rachal herself then jumped. Wags promptly dubbed the suicidal clan "the Leaping Longos".

Incredibly, one child, 15-yr old Rachal Jr. survived the plunge. At last report, she remembered nothing about the day of the jump, but was sure that she'll see her family again in heaven.

RICHARD WORTHINGTON: To his Sandy, UT neighbors, Richard Worthington was just another good Mormon family man. But within this apparently laudable role lurked the seeds of violence. Worthington proves that even non-cult Mormons can be prone to bloody outbreaks of righteous slaughter.

His wife, Karen, had had enough. Children, that is. After ten increasingly difficult pregnancies resulting in eight children, she finally got a tubal litigation in 1989 for health reasons. Unfortunately, Richard did not consent.

Worthington didn't merely disapprove; he was enraged. Not only did he think his wife had been sterilized against her will, he was convinced he had another little girl floating around the Mormon pre-existence. A LDS spokesman later denied that this is current doctrine, but did admit that Worthington was entitled to his revelation.

Worthington's rage simmered for two years. Finally, thoughts of his brutalized, barren wife and his poor baby girl trapped in limbo became too much for him to bear.

In September 1991, he exploded in a blazing fury of righteous Mormon anger. He burst into the local maternity ward, hunting for his wife's obstetrician and shouting "Those doctors raped my wife." Luckily, his quarry heard the uproar and escaped with an armload of newborns. However, seven hostages, including an expectant mother, remained at Worthington's mercy. And mercy is what they needed. Mormon wrath is invariably heavily armed. Worthington packed a shotgun and a .357 magnum, with 42 sticks of dynamite hidden outside -- enough to flatten half the block.

Worthington first tried to herd the nurses to his car, but one grabbed for his gun. He shot and killed her and, using the remaining nurse as a shield, retreated to the maternity ward. After forcing the expectant father to retrieve his bomb, he settled in for a siege.

Over the next 18 hours, Worthington was on an emotional rollercoaster. He demolished his wife's doctor's office. At his lows, he told his hostages, "I'm going to die tonight and you're all going to die with me." But they were the ups, especially the mother gave birth under primitive conditions. "Oh, she's so cute," Worthington gushed over the squalling infant. He even made a nurse call his wife, who was properly apologetic. "Oh, I'm so sorry. I knew he was coming up there. Does he have any dynamite? He has dynamite, you know."

Finally, after 18 hours of negotiations with police, Worthington surrendered to police. By then, a Stockholm Syndrome type bond had developed between the increasingly repentant captor and his captives. Before he marched out to surrender, he handed his hostages small mementos -- a crystal unicorn here, an urn there -- and asked the surviving nurse to cut off his little finger and give it to his wife. After she refused, he said, "Oh hell, let's just get out of here." And thus ended the siege.

JEFFREY LUNDGREN: Jeffrey Lundgren proves that it's not just the Salt Lake City Latter Day Saints who go blood cult. His roots were in the Independence, MO based Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which split off from the main LDS group in the 1850s and remained in Missouri while the rest of the Saints went on to fame and fortune in Utah.

Convinced by the movie "Highlander" that he was destined for something special, Lundgren started receiving revelations and visions in the early '80s. Several outlined a peculiar way of diagramming biblical passages to divine their

"true meaning"; others advised him of his destiny as a prophet and the redeemer of Zion. He taught the "pattern" to his Sunday School class in Kirtland, OH and gradually built up a small following for his fundamentalist message.

The local RLDS leaders did not approve, especially when Lundgren railed against the new RLDS policy of admitting women into the priesthood. To prevent a split congregation, they threw him out. He moved with 15 followers to a farm outside of town, started a commune and plotted a mass takeover of the Kirtland temple. His plan called for killing all 25 people living within a block of the temple and beheading the local church president.

Alas, it was not to be. Before he could put his bloody plan into action, another revelation informed him that the cult would be personally touched by God. But only if Lundgren was "endowed by the power" via blood atonement of the wicked in their midst. The designated evil ones were the Avery family: husband, wife, and three daughters, aged 15, 13, and 6 respectively.

The unlucky family were invited to the farm one evening in 1989. One by one, Lundgren's followers lured them out to the barn, where a pre-dug mass grave awaited. Except for Dennis Avery, each one was bound, gagged, and thrown into pit. As they lay in the muck, wondering if this was latest ritual revealed by God, Lundgren shot them. Dennis Avery wasn't blindfolded -- he was thrown into the pit face up at Lundgren's request: "I want him to see who is administering justice".

After the quintuple killings, Lundgren led his faithful band into the wilderness of West Virginia for what was billed as a face-to-face meeting with God. Alas, He was not forthcoming. Instead, the cultists had to bear the brunt of Lundgren's increasingly kinky revelations which ran the gamut from the scatological to the merely bizarre. At one point, each female cultist in turn had to dance naked in front of Lundgren as he masturbated into their panties. And why? A vagina had been revealed to him in a dream; he was looking to take the attached woman as a plural wife. Doubt set in and the cult fell apart.

Lundgren was finally arrested in San Diego in 1990. At his trial, he told the jury "Prophets have been asked by the Lord to go forth and kill since the beginning of time." He is currently on Ohio's Death Row.

OTHER MORMON CRIMES

Of course, a good Mormon upbringing is far from a prophylactic against criminal behavior. No matter how many Temple recommends they've accumulated, Mormons are behest by the same passions that rack Gentile folk. And sometimes, they even respond and commit a crime on their own without any direct authorization from God.

MARK HOFFMAN: The man who earned Salt Lake City its brief sobriquet of "The Beirut of the West" was, from all outward appearances, a solid Saint. He had an ideal Mormon childhood, tithed regularly, diligently wore his Mormon underwear and was never remiss in his church duties. But underneath the "garments" was the ultimate LDS nightmare: an anti-Mormon atheist who despised the church and wanted nothing more than to discredit it. Especially if he could make a few bucks in the process.

Hoffman specialized in forging historic Mormon documents. He started out with "faith affirming" items supporting official LDS history. The Church eagerly purchased and publicized his "finds". He gradually shifted to "faith-destroying" documents that cast doubt on the authenticity of the Church. They bought, just as urgently, but without a breath of publicity. In true Orwellian fashion, they quickly locked them up in "the Vault". Just for fun, Hoffman would leak them to the press anyway. He was carefully setting them up for "the big score": a forgery of the long-lost opening 116 pages of *The Book of Mormon*. And odds were it was going to read more like the preamble to a bad novel than scripture.

It was not to be. In October, 1985, Steve Christensen, the Church's representative on a deal, was about to call in a document expert who could expose the whole thing. Hoffman tried to salvage his life's work with a day of bombing. The first bomb blew Christensen to bits. Then, to make it look the fallout from

Christensen's other business problems, a second bomb killed Christensen's partner's wife. A third bomb, intended for a high ranking church official, blew up on Hoffman in front of LDS headquarters, severely injuring him and bringing the whole sordid story to light.

And just to show what the mood is like in Salt Lake these days, when the bombs started going off, everyone, from the inner sanctums of the LDS church to the storefront anti-Mormons immediately assumed "cults at work."

ARTHUR BISHOP: No list of criminals is complete without a serial sex killer, and Bishop appears to lead Mormons in this category. The product of a good LDS upbringing, Bishop was an honor student and dutifully did a 2-year mission in the Philippines. Things didn't start going wrong for him until 1974, when he was 23 and forged a $9,000 check. He got off light, but rather than comply with his probation, he assumed a new identity and was excommunicated, presumably in absentia.

Besides his penchant for forgery, Bishop was a pedophile specializing in prepubescent boys. He kidnapped, molested and killed his first victim, a 4-year old boy, in 1979. Over the next four years, he killed four more, all between the ages of 4 and 13, and molested many others. He was finally caught in 1983 when he struck too close to home. His 13-yr old victim had planned to go on a camping trip with his "friendly neighbor" the week he disappeared. As a result, the cops questioned Bishop very closely and he broke down and confessed. He later said, "I'm glad they caught me, because I'd go do it again." Ironically, weeks before his arrest, his brother had also been arrested for molesting boys.

Convicted and sentenced to death on five counts of kidnapping and murder, Worthington was properly repentant of his crimes and spent his last time studying *The Book of Mormon*. Widely circulated rumors put a $10,000 price on the Bishop brothers' heads. Nonetheless, Bishop survived to be executed, as he specified, by lethal injection in 1988.

JOHN MIDGETT: Midgett proves that Mormonism hardly renders its followers from the temptations of the flesh, no matter how perverse. In a true crime for the '90s, Midgett, a Navy Petty Officer 1st Class, pled guilty 43 counts of child molestation. His eight victims were all five to ten year old girls who attended a Mormon Sunday School class he taught in San Diego.

Midgett was properly contrite. "I'm a sick person", he admitted. "I tried to control this on my own but I can't." He also took up the chorus usually only heard from lynch-law minded parents forming said that the children had all told the truth.

CECIL JACOBSON: Dr. Cecil Jacobson had been raised Mormon, dutifully doing a 2-year stint missionary. After his return, he went to medical school, eventually leaving Zion in Utah to run a fertility clinic in Vienna, VA.

For many years, he operated a lucrative, if not always ethical, practice. After numerous complaints, the Virginia Medical revoked his license in 1989 and ordered him to refund $250,000 to his patients. Among other things, he made a habit of telling his patients they were pregnant when they weren't and later claiming they'd miscarried.

But the thing that drew the media to his fraud and perjury trial was the way he ran the artificial insemination end of his business. Jacobson's favorite semen donor was Cecil Jacobson. He claimed his motives were altruistic -- he only did his part when the scheduled donor didn't show and "I knew my semen was safe because I haven't slept with anyone but my wife in our 30 years of marriage." The more cynical may suspect him of using this unorthodox form of neopolygamy to pop just that many more babies out of the preexistence. He definitely sired 15 children by his patients, and is suspected of fathering 60 more.

In a media-circus trial featuring amazing displays of ingratitude by his children and former patients, Jacobson was convicted of 52 counts of fraud and perjury.

Please Mr. Postman

★★★★ 1993 ★★★★

May, 6, 1993 will forever be a red letter day in USPS history. In an unprecedented display of mailroom mayhem, rampaging postal workers -- one in Michigan, one in California -- allegedly struck, leaving four dead in their wake. The otherwise unrelated attacks mark the first post office "daily double" slayings.

"Bloody Thursday" dawned in the Detroit suburb of Dearborn. Around 8:45 AM, postal mechanic Larry Jasion brought his 24 year USPS career to a dramatic close. Armed with a handgun and shotgun, he marched into the USPS garage where he had worked for so many years and opened fire, killing a mechanic. Moving into another area, he shouted, "It's time to educate the supervisors!" and shot and injured two more former fellow workers. One was the garage supervisor who was noted for his firm management style -- an anonymous letter about him in the union newsletter was headlined "Dictator". The other victim was a woman who had recently beaten Jasion out for a coveted promotion. She suffered two bullet wounds to her head, and one to her back. At last report, she was still in intensive care faced with possible paralysis. A third man, fleeing the flying bullets, fell and injured his hip. Jasion himself ended his brief rampage with the traditional bullet to the head.

All the warning signs had been there. The Dearborn post office evidently was a sealed pressure vessel about to blow. The union newsletter described the situation as "a time bomb going tick, tick, tick." A Detroit area mail carrier said, "It's pretty bad in Dearborn... They'll go to any extreme to get their mail out." Shortly after the 1991 shootings in nearby Royal Oak (Thomas McIlvane -- 4 dead, 5 wounded, suicide), a sign in the Dearborn post office threatened to "make Royal Oak look like Christmas."

After the shootings, a former Dearborn postmaster recalled, "If you ask any employee there, 99% of them would say if something like this was going to happen, it would be Larry Jasion... " Co-workers remember him as "eccentric" and "not your average Joe". He was a virtual clone of his fellow pistol packing postal brethren. A maladjusted loner with 2 years in the Army under his belt, Jasion was obsessed with guns. He lived alone in a house cluttered with guns, ammunition, and ordnance manuals, but with only one setting of silverware and no functional oven. His windows were painted white and walled shut; his response to a friendly "Good morning" was "What's so good about it?". After the 1986 Edmond, OK shootings (Patrick Sherrill; 14 dead, 7 wounded, suicide), he informed his then supervisor who'd be the next target of the rank & file's wrath. After a year or two of Jasion pointing his finger at him, making machine gun noises and rapturously describing his 9mm pistol, the supervisor wisely retired.

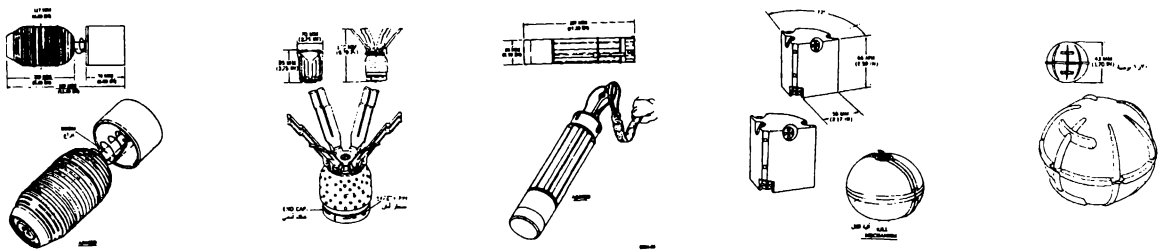
By 1992, Jasion was reaching his boiling point. The work pace was relentless; mandatory overtime was the rule. His mother, herself a retired disgruntled postal worker, died. He lost out on a lateral transfer to a woman he thought lesser qualified. He even hired a private detective to investigate his suspicions. Nonetheless, his sex discrimination complaint was rejected. His closest friend retired. And his co-workers and supervisor blasted rock music on the garage radio, turning the volume up every time he complained. Something was bound to give. And it did.

Postmaster General Marvin Rayburn was attending a meeting in Baltimore

——continued...——

خطر المتفجرات

THE DANGER OF EXPLOSIVES



قد تأتي في احجام مختلفة

NO MATTER THE SIZE

وقد تأتي في أشكال مختلفة

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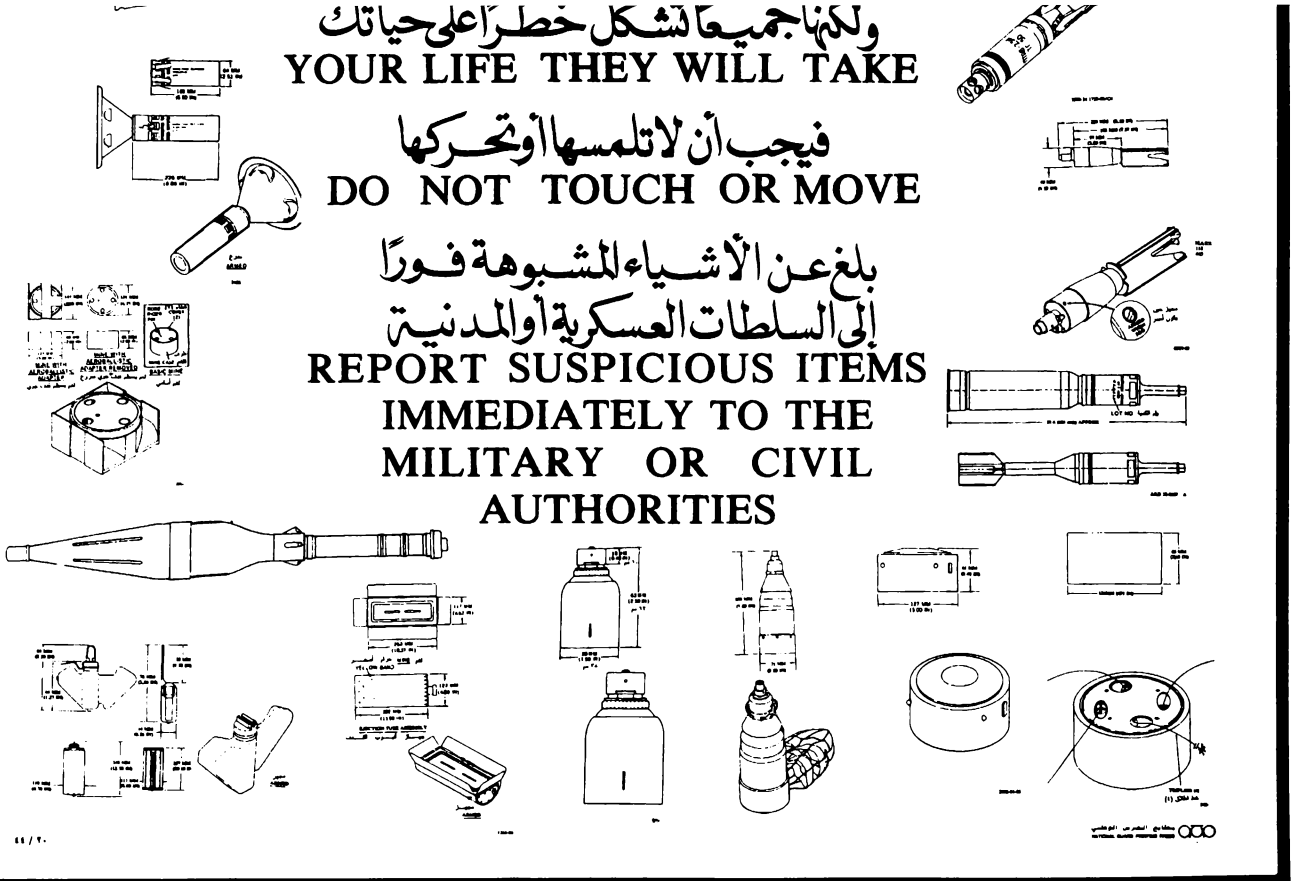


Post-Gulf War Kuwait poster

submitted by Dave P.

when he heard the news. He immediately set out for this latest USPS hot spot. But, before he could even board a plane to Michigan, another postal worker cracked in California. Rayburn hurriedly delegated this additional damage control to a high-ranking assistant while he continued on to Michigan.

Less than four hours later and more than 2400 miles away in Orange County, a different, but hardly unfamiliar postal drama reached its tragic climax. Mark Hilbun was a lonely man. The Air Force veteran lived alone in an apartment with windows covered by newspaper. But he had a dream -- true love. For a year, the 38-yr old would-be mailroom Romeo had pursued a fellow letter carrier in the Dana Point post office. He sent her love notes, roses, and even a book on relationships. It didn't work. She spurned his every advance. He took to following her on her route, calling her late at night, and sending her photos of him kayaking with lewd messages scrawled on the back. She remained unmoved by this display of dedication and stubbornly refused to leave her boyfriend.

The unsentimental postal management took a dim view of Hilbun's antics. Besides his determined courting techniques, Hilbun had a history of bizarre behavior. One memorable day, he showed up at work with a pet rabbit in his mailbag and his underwear outside his pants. When his fashion faux pas was pointed out, he responded by putting the underwear on his head. Not surprisingly, he was remembered as a "very odd" and a quiet loner by his fellows.

In September, he was diagnosed as manic depressive. Initially, the USPS put him on paid leave for his mental problems. But his four year postal career came to a close in December when he was fired for being "not fit for duty".

Although upset, Hilbun didn't let the end of his cherished career interfere with his romantic obsession. Even as he pursued reinstatement, he continued to camp on his desired's doorstep and bombard her with threatening letters. A final one ominously told her, "I love you. I'm going to kill us both and take us both to hell". She planned to get a restraining order on her next payday. Unfortunately, she wouldn't be paid until the day after "Bloody Thursday".

Before dawn on that fateful morning, someone brutally stabbed Hilbun's mother and pet cocker spaniel "Golden" to death in her Corona Del Mar home. And then at 9:30 AM, only hours after Jasion put his gun to his head in Dearborn, Hilbun allegedly struck.

It wasn't as if management was negligent. The Dana Point post office staff were on a homicide alert. They had strict orders to keep doors locked and specific instructions to keep him out. Nonetheless, Hilbun, stylishly attired in a tie-dyed "Psycho" t-shirt, purportedly snuck into the Dana Point post office through a loading dock. According to witnesses, he ordered everyone to get down, called out for his beloved and opened fire. She managed to hide; however, bullets killed one worker and injured another. Ironically, the dead mailman was Hilbun's closest workplace friend. A staunch supporter of both handgun control and the Grateful Dead, he repeatedly advised Hilbun, in connection with his lady love, to "let it go, reorganize your life, focus on something different".

After firing a few ineffectual bullets for luck through the locked doors of the postmaster's office, Hilbun reportedly tried the escrow office next door. A selfless USPS worker no doubt saved the office staff's lives by holding the door shut. The quick assault then ended. Hilbun allegedly fled in a pickup with a kayak strapped on the roof.

But then, according to police reports, something ominous and unprecedented in the annals of postal violence began. Hilbun apparently took his friend's advice and refocused his rage. And in doing to, he brought the postal wars to the streets. For the first time, innocent civilians were the targets of postal wrath.

Ten minutes later and a half mile away, a man meeting Hilbun's description

Updated
Alleged Rampages by Postal Employees
1980 - 1993

	-Employees-		-Civilians-		
	Killed	**Wounded**	**Killed**	**Wounded**	**Suicide?**
Dearborn, MI 1993	1	2	0	0	Yes
Dana Point, CA 1993	1	1	1	4	No
TOTALS	**34**	**26**	**4**	**8**	**5**

(Assailants are not included in dead and wounded totals.)

pistol whipped, shot and injured a man working in his garage in a bungled robbery attempt. The assailant fled the scene in a truck with a kayak on top. Later that afternoon, a Dana Point man discovered evidence of an intruder; someone had discarded a kayak in his garage, entered his home, opened two beers, and drank a glass of wine.

Around 3 PM, a man stole some commercial magnetic signs off a woman's car in Newport Beach. Evidently, the thief intended to put them on his own truck to disguise it. She gave chase as he drove off in a pickup. He stopped, jumped out and ran to her car, gun in hand. She was injured with bullets to the neck, shoulder, and arm. Her dogs, riding with her, were unharmed.

The rest of Thursday, and all of Friday were quiet. Mail deliveries were suspended at the Dana Point post office and armed guards posted. School children were kept indoors as tensions ran high and the police scoured the county for Hilbun. His intended girlfriend was put into her protective custody, and most of her family took a sudden trip outside the area. Her father, however, remained behind, announcing to the media, "All I want... is to see this son of a bitch dead."

Finally, shortly after midnight in Fountain Valley, a gunman wounded a man and woman in an ATM line in while robbing them. Twenty minutes later, in a nearby Huntington Beach sports bar, a patron spotted Hilbun peacefully sipping a Stoli & 7. The spotter's companion, a United Parcel Service sorter, did the honors of dropping the dime. Three cops promptly arrived arrested Hilbun without incident. "He was as cool as a cucumber", one policeman later recalled. Hilbun is currently being held for his possible involvement in the series of attacks that left two dead and five injured.

In the wake of the shootings, NBC pulled ads for a "Cheers" episode wherein a letter carrier is suspected of killing his mother.

One can only sympathize with the plight of the USPS vice president of labor relations. "We cannot fire people who have a tendency to wear camouflage jackets or a fascination with gunfire. You fire someone and they go away -- and they come back." Simple bureaucratic obstacles cannot stay postal workers as they diligently complete their appointed rounds of slaughter. It's only a matter of time -- and bullets -- before some enterprising, nameless mailman dethrones Patrick Sherrill as the reigning champion of mailroom multicide.

RANSOM KIDNAPPING OF CHILDREN

An American Top Twelve

In my mind, ransom kidnapping of children is the most dramatic and exciting of crimes. It's not that other criminal offenses are dull. Murder, arson, bombings and bank robberies have their appeal, but once the deed is done, it's done. And that's just a matter of moments. Save for the manhunt, there's no opportunity for suspense. The deed culminates too quickly into a final outcome.

A kidnapping, on the other hand... it's pure theater. A child is taken, the parents go apeshit, and the drama begins. Hours or days later, the ransom demand is made. Suspense builds. Can the police find the kidnapper's lair before the ransom deadline? The decisions -- to pay or not to pay? A trap at the ransom pickup -- yes or no? The newspapers -- voluntarily muzzled or banner headlines?

The demands are met, the ransom paid. Now for the climax, the spotlight shifts to the kidnappers. Will they honor their oral contract, or opt for a conservative, "dead kids tell no tales" approach? Finally, the denouement. The kidnappers are caught, the ransom recovered, and the body of the victim found. All loose ends are tied up neatly. Crime does not pay, the papers scream. The armchair theorists start speculating -- is there a really foolproof way of collecting the ransom?

And then there's the atmosphere, especially when the press gets in during the early stages. The tearful mother beseeching her child's captors.... the stoic father awaiting the next communique... the child's empty room, with its toys and neatly made bed, undisturbed since the abduction....

It's a regular soap opera.

Unfortunately, in this country the Lindbergh case has overshadowed every child kidnapping before or since. But, contrary to popular belief, child kidnapping for ransom did not begin or end with the little lost Eaglet. Criminals of all stripes, from the bumbling amateur to cold-blooded professional, have tried their hands at the crime. And the results have ranged from slick, almost business-like transactions to some of the most brutal, senseless, and highly publicized killings in US history. But they all have one thing in common. Never for one moment have they been dull.

"LITTLE" CHARLEY ROSS
Philadelphia, 1874

It's a stunning indictment of the American criminal class that it took their collective minds almost 100 years to figure out that parents would be willing to pay big bucks for the return of their little darlings. Yes, Little Charley Ross was the first child to be kidnapped in America for ransom.

Even in those halcyon days, parents warned their children against strangers. The two kidnappers, however, cleverly wormed their way in 4-yr old Charley and his 6-yr old brother Walter's confidence by casually giving the boys candy as they played in front of their home several times in the days before the crime. Thus, the

"Little" Charles Brewster Ross

boys didn't hesitate to go for a buggy ride with them to purchase firecrackers for the rapidly approaching 4th of July.

Walter was released unharmed a few hours later. Charley, however, vanished. His father, Christian Ross, received a $20,000 ransom note several days later. Acting on police advice, he refused to pay and cooperated in setting a series of traps for the kidnappers. They didn't work.

Public hysteria gradually built to a fevered pitch over the next few months. No one in the company of a young curly haired blond boys was safe from the harassment of would-be Charley Ross spotters. From coast to coast, children were accosted on the streets, and innocent parents reported to local police. One group of excited amateur detectives almost lynched a band of Gypsies.

Three weeks later, the police were tipped that the kidnappers were William Mosher and Joseph Douglas. Unfortunately, the pair were shot in December while burgling a house. Mosher died instantly; Douglas lingered a little while longer. He confessed to the crime, but died before revealing Charley's whereabouts or fate.

In the ensuing years, the Ross family became a lightning rod for the lost, the confused, and the greedy. In the first four years alone, Ross checked out 573 claimants. As the years went by, a steady stream of "Charley Rosses", slowly aging from childhood into adolescence and adulthood, continued to come forward. By 1939, when a 69-yr old claimant pressed his case, the family had turned their thumbs down on approximately 5000 ersatz Charleys. No trace of the real Charley Ross was ever found.

EDDIE CUDAHAY
Omaha, 1900

The first successful American ransom kidnapping for all parties concerned. The kidnappers got the $$$, the parents got the kid, breathing and in one piece, and no one went to jail.

15-yr old Eddie, son of a multimillionaire meatpacker, was grabbed one December evening while running an errand. Two ransom notes quickly followed, threatening to blind Eddie with acid. The family paid the $25,000 ransom the next evening, in gold as specified. Cudahay Sr. himself insisted the cops stay away from the exchange. Eddie was released unharmed the next morning.

Of course, kidnappers Pat Crowe and James Callahan were eventually caught.

Callahan was the first, a year after the snatch. In a major embarrassment for the prosecution, Nebraska law at the time only outlawed kidnapping with intent of interstate transportation. Callahan was acquitted of robbery charge.

Plot mastermind Crowe surrendered four years later and was charged with extortion. He was cleared when Cudahay himself testified that he'd given Crowe the $25,000 entirely of his own free will. As such, it was hardly extortion. The apparent sympathy of the juries for the kidnappers was no doubt helped by Cudahay Sr.'s massive unpopularity due to his anti-union stands.

After this, Nebraska and several other states (some of whom who had no kidnapping laws at all) rushed to outlaw kidnapping in all forms.

For years, Crowe reportedly sent young Eddie occasional cards signed "your kidnapper".

BLAKELY COUGHLIN
Norristown, PA 1920

On June 2, 13-month old Blakely, scion of a wealthy family, was literally snatched from his crib. Cranks bombarded the distraught family with some 30 fake ransom letters. Nonetheless, they spotted the real one and paid the kidnapper $12,000 as demanded. He didn't come live up to his part of the bargain, though. Blakely was not returned.

Like so many criminals in other fields of endeavor, kidnapper August Pascal's downfall was greed. $12,000, although a tidy fortune in 1920 dollars, wasn't enough. Two months later, police arrested him trying to extort an additional $10,000 from the Coughlins. He readily confessed to the kidnapping, but refused to play his ace, Blakely himself. He would only reveal the boy's whereabouts and/or fate in exchange for complete immunity. The newspapers, and indeed everyone else connected with the case, went into apoplectic fits.

Needless to say, no offer of immunity was forthcoming. Pascal finally claimed Blakely had accidently smothered as he fled the Coughlin house and he'd thrown the boy's body into the river. He was convicted and sentenced to life. Blakely's body was never found.

GIUSEPPI VEROTTA
New York City, 1921

You can look at the ransom agreement as a contract between the victim's family and the kidnappers: pay up and the victim will be released unharmed. Generally, the family upholds their end of the deal; it's the kidnappers who renege and, cash in hand, kill the victim anyway. But the Verotta case was the converse: the first time the kidnappers kept the flipside of their promise and killed the captive when the ransom wasn't paid.

Acting on rumors that the Verotta family had collected a $50,000 settlement in an injury suit, a Black Hand extortion gang seized 5-yr old Giuseppi as he played in front of his family's house. They demanded $2500 ransom. But, not only was there no "$50,000 injury settlement", Giuseppi's father, a pushcart merchant, couldn't even raise the $2500.

The gang whittled their demand down to $500, but they wouldn't even get that. In a gutsy but ill-advised move, Verotta Sr. single-handedly captured one of the kidnappers at the ransom pick-up. Four others were arrested by police. The gang members who remained at large retaliated by strangling little Giuseppi. His body washed up on an island in the Hudson River a week later.

Although the five prisoner's confessions implicated as many as forty other individuals, no one else, including the actual killer of little Giuseppi, was ever caught. One of the kidnappers was found insane and committed to an asylum. The others were all convicted and sentenced to death. Their sentences were later all commuted to life imprisonment.

BOBBY FRANKS
Chicago, 1924

It was 1924's "Crime of the Century", but in all the excitement, most people forgot that it was *supposed* to be a ransom kidnapping. Nathan Leopold and friend Richard Loeb were like teens everywhere: bored. But they were also rich, incredibly brilliant, and fancied themselves Nietzschean superman above the law. So, for the thrill of it all, they picked up 14-yr old Bobby in front of his school. He got in their car willingly; after all, he and knew the pair and was reportedly distantly related to Loeb.

Joyriding was not on the agenda that afternoon. They quickly smashed his head in with a chisel, doused his face, stomach, and genitals with acid to hinder identification, and dumped the body in what they thought was a remote culvert. They then telephoned the Franks, told them their son had been kidnapped and sent a ransom note demanding $10,000.

Unfortunately for the would-be supermen, the body was found shortly after the Franks received the ransom letter. And near the mutilated corpse was a nice calling card: Leopold's glasses. Before the glasses were traced, Loeb tagged along with the cops, offering such helpful suggestions as "If I were going to pick out a boy to kidnap or murder, that's just the kind of cocky little son-of-a-bitch I would pick."

The pair avoided the chair through one of Clarence Darrow's most memorable defenses. Loeb went on to be slashed to death with a razor in a homosexual prison brawl in 1936. Leopold, however, made parole in 1958. Totally reformed, he moved to Puerto Rico, married, and led a quiet life devoted to medical research until his death in 1971.

MARION PARKER
Los Angeles, 1927

The Parker kidnapping is by far the most insane and inexplicably brutal kidnapping in American history. It was also the first ransom kidnapping to end with the execution of the kidnapper. And even the most dedicated foe of capital punishment would have to admit that if you're going to execute kidnappers, this was a good place to start.

The case began when a man called for 12-year old Marion Parker from school, claiming her bank clerk father had been in a car accident. Unfortunately, the school secretary didn't know Marion. Otherwise she would have noticed something a little bit odd. Why would Marion be summoned to her father's bedside, but not her twin sister, Marjorie?

The drama was played out on the front pages of the Los Angeles Papers. A series of four chilling ransom notes followed demanding $1500, each advising "If you want aid against me ask GOD not man". The police obligingly supplied all the notes to the newspapers to use as headline fodder in the circulation wars. The police scared off the kidnapper with a bungled trap at the first drop-off, but the second one, sans cops, went better. Parker handed the kidnapper the money. In exchange, he received Marion, wrapped in a blanket and apparently drugged.

A quick examination, however, revealed that she was as threatened in the ransom notes: "a lifeless mass of flesh". Her arms and legs (some source claim only her legs) had been sawed off and a wire twisted around her throat. Her eyelids had been sewn open for the life-like appearance that fooled Parker initially. As to why anyone would bother to return a dead child, much less a dead, dismembered child... well, that's one for the ages.

Within a week, police arrested the kidnapper, Ed Hickman, who was variously reported as being 18 or 20 years old, in Oregon. He had worked at the same bank as Parker and had been fired for forging a check, although he denied the revenge motive. Quickly convicted, he was hanged in San Quentin less than a year later for murder.

GEORGE WEYERHAUSER
Tacoma 1935

Spurred by publicity of the family fortune in the reports of his timber tycoon grandfather's death eight days earlier, kidnappers snatched 9-year old George Weyerhauser on his way home from school. Hours later, his family received a ransom note demanding $200,000 ransom. They quickly paid. George was released unharmed after a week, only a little worse for wear after spending his captivity chained to trees and rocks in the woods.

The ransom money, its serial numbers recorded, started popping up immediately. Within two weeks, police arrested two of the kidnappers, Harmon and Margaret Waley, in Salt Lake City. They would receive prison terms of 45 and 20 years respectively.

Plot leader William Dainard remained at large for almost a year. It wasn't easy. He was smart enough not to spend his cut of the ransom. However, this was the middle of the Depression and other sources of income were hard to come by. Dainard spent most of the year on the rough, drifting through the Skid Rows of the West with thousands of dollars of unspendable cash sewn in the lining of his tattered coat. He finally broke down and started cashing it in. The FBI quickly caught up to him in San Francisco. He would be sentenced to 60 years in prison.

CHARLES MATTSON
Tacoma, 1936

A day after Christmas, a masked gunman burst into the home of Dr. William Mattson, a prominent surgeon. Waving his gun around, he demanded money from 10-year old Charles, his teenaged brother and sister, and a house guest. However, this was just a diversion. He quickly got to the point. Grabbing Charles, he announced "This is better than money" and fled, but not before his mask slipped down, revealing his face. Ironically, the Mattsons lived only three blocks from George Weyerhauser's family. Charles had even been one George's playmates.

The kidnapper had left behind a ransom note printed with a child's print set demanding for $28,000. The Mattsons were prepared to pay. They dutifully responded and following instructions, they established communication with the kidnapper via a series of personal ads in the newspaper. Unfortunately, this wasn't the only coverage in the newspaper. The media descended on the

Artist's idea of kidnaper, as depicted from Mattson guest's view of man who invaded home to seize lad

Mattson -- the kidnapper
(Do you know this man?)

PERSONAL 12

MABEL — We are ready, everything entirely in accordance with your desires. ANN

BALLR [illegible] Melrose [illegible] Kn- on back. Reward.

PERSONAL 12

MABLE—We are still waiting. All arrangements have been carried out in accordance with instructions contained in notes received. Be certain to give me information so that I may guard against imposters and hi-jackers, and be more specific in your instructions. In view of lapse of time also desire new proof my son is alive and well.—ANN

Mattson -- the ads

Mattsons and covered the kidnapping in the true American circus style.

The kidnapper, probably frightened by the publicity, stopped responding. The Mattson family ran one last frantic ad January 7. The next day, they received a call from the purported kidnapper. He told them to pick up ransom instructions on a certain Seattle street corner. But, before he gave Mattson complete details, he said, "I'm in a hot spot" and hung up. The call was later traced to a broken-into Seattle gas station. Needless to say, there were no instructions at the designated street corner. No word was ever heard from the kidnapper again.

Charles's frozen body was found in an Everett, WA field three days later. He had been stabbed and beaten to death, evidently while eating. The FBI launched an intensive investigation, checking out over 25,000 suspects. Nonetheless, the kidnapper or kidnappers were never captured. The case became the first major unsolved ransom kidnapping since the FBI received jurisdiction.

BOBBY GREENLEASE
Kansas City, MO 1953

Next to the Lindbergh baby, the Greenlease kidnapping is most notorious American child kidnapping. Taking a page from kidnapping history, 6-year old Bobby was taken from his private school by kidnappers using the same "ill relative" ruse as Ed Hickman. Robert Greenlease Sr. owned a string of car dealerships throughout the Midwest and willing paid the record-setting $600,000 ransom within a week. It was all for nothing.

Bobby's kidnappers, Carl Austin Hall and Bonnie Heady, were a pair of pathetic, alcoholic losers operating completely out of their league. Hall had squandered a $200,000 inheritance on booze and bad business ventures. Prior to the snatch, Hall's criminal career of a string of taxicab stickups that netted $33. Heady was a divorced, alcoholic hooker/party girl. Practically first thing Hall did after getting home with Bobby was to take him out to the back yard and shoot him.

Two days later, Hall was fingered by a cabbie suspicious of the large amount of money his fare waved around. Police had no trouble catching up to him as he tore around on a major hooker and booze spree. Heady was arrested soon after. Between the cash on pair when they were arrested and what they'd managed to spend already, police accounted for $300,000 of the ransom.

In a blinding display of speedy justice, both were tried, convicted, sentenced to death and executed in December, only 81 days after the killing. The missing $300,000, however, was never found.

KENNETH YOUNG
Beverly Hills, 1967

In the most daring kidnapping since little Lindy, a kidnapper singlehandedly grabbed 11-yr old Kenneth from his second floor bedroom as he slept. The ransom was set at $250,000. Unlike the Parker case, there wasn't a breath of publicity. Kenneth's father, a wealthy bank president, wisely complied, and paid the ransom. The boy was released unharmed. It was one of the largest ransoms ever paid for a live victim.

The case remained unsolved almost three years in spite of the efforts of battalions of FBI agents. Finally, someone talked. The man who had acted as a lookout during the kidnapping, who was already serving time in prison on unrelated charges, agreed to talk in exchange for complete immunity. Only three days before the statute of limitations expired, kidnaper Ronald Miller was charged with the crime.

At the time of his indictment, Miller himself was in jail awaiting trial for robbing a market and a theater. Presumably, the $250,000 ransom was long gone. He hadn't even been able raise an $1875 bond premium to post bail on the robbery charges. Prior to his arrest, he had been an IRS intelligence agent. His duties had included stints as bodyguard for both Richard Nixon and Hubert Humphrey. He was eventually convicted and sentenced to life.

KEITH ARNOLD AND GERALD CRAFT
Detroit, 1973

It was the "Black Lindbergh Case", widely reported in the black press but receiving only minor attention nationally. Eight-year old Gerald, a child model and actor best known for his impish grin in a Kentucky Fried Chicken commercial, and six-year old Keith, were kidnapped as they played football in front of Keith's babysitter's house.

Oddly enough, the kidnappers' evident target had been Keith. Gerald had apparently only been an afterthought. At least one of the kidnappers appeared to know Keith's mother's boyfriend, who was allegedly involved in the local numbers racket. The kidnapper's phone calls came on Keith's family's unlisted number. At first, they asked for $53,000 ransom, but later dropped their demand to $15,000.

The police planned to set a trap at the ransom pickup. However, the kidnappers changed the drop-off location at the last minute. They spotted the police and managed to grab the ransom package and flee on foot.

Unfortunately, the package only contained cut-up paper. Three days later, the bullet-riddled bodies of the two boys were found in fields outside Detroit.

The three kidnappers, Byron Smith, Geary Gilmore, and Jerome Holloway, were all quickly captured. The trio all had records and each had been previously implicated in drug-related murders. They all received life terms, and Kentucky Fried Chicken presumably permanently shelved their plans to re-use Gerald's commercial

CHOWCHILLA
Chowchilla, CA 1976

The Chowchilla kidnap gang thought big. In the most massive kidnapping in US history, three men hi-jacked a school bus returning children from summer school in Chowchilla, CA. Transferring their captives to a pair of vans, they drove the bus driver and 26 children, ranging in age from 7 to 14, and the busdriver to a quarry in Livermore, 100 miles away. They were imprisoned in a moving van buried in a remote part of the quarry.

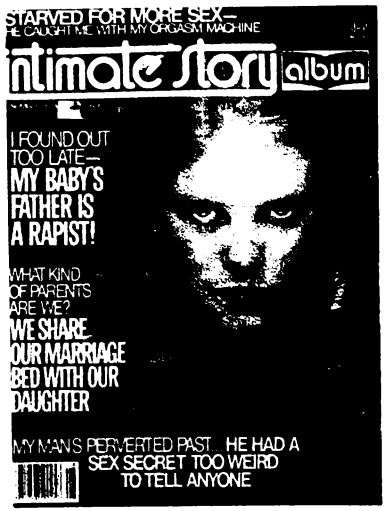
Unfortunately, the improvised subterranean prison would prove to be less secure than the plotters anticipated. The hatch was only secured by a pair of industrial batteries weighing a few hundred pounds. Even as the kidnappers were congratulating themselves on a clever job well done and relaxing while they waited for suspense to build to a fevered pitch, their captives were at work. Finally, after 16 hours, the driver and a few of the older kids managed to lift the hatch and dislodge the batteries. They all climbed out and were quickly discovered by some very surprised quarry workers.

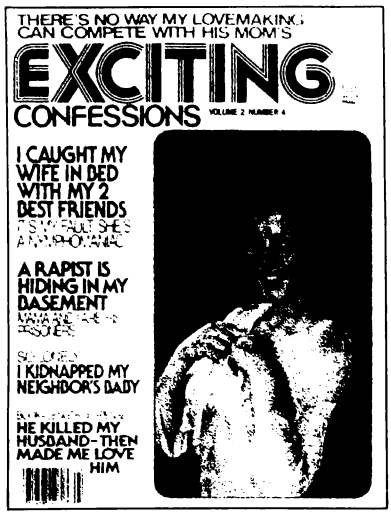
This, naturally, interrupted the kidnapper's work on their $5 million ransom letter. They fled, but within two weeks, all three kidnappers, Frederick Woods, and brothers Richard and James Schoenfeld, were captured.

They were far from experienced criminals. All in their 20s and from upper-middle class backgrounds, they were motivated and united by a common desire for wealth and lacked any serious lawbreaking experience. Not too surprisingly, they were done in by their own overly complex plan loaded with details just waiting to trip them up.

Actually, they were lucky the kids got out. The moving van's jury-rigged ventilation system was so rinky dink there was a good chance of winding up with 27 corpses. But even though the kids got out essentially unharmed, they were convicted of kidnapping with bodily injury and sentenced to life.

BIZARRE CONFESSIONS


STARVED FOR MORE SEX—
HE CAUGHT ME WITH MY ORGASM MACHINE
Intimate Story album
I FOUND OUT TOO LATE—
MY BABY'S FATHER IS A RAPIST!
WHAT KIND OF PARENTS ARE WE?
WE SHARE OUR MARRIAGE BED WITH OUR DAUGHTER
MY MAN'S PERVERTED PAST... HE HAD A SEX SECRET TOO WEIRD TO TELL ANYONE


THERE'S NO WAY MY LOVEMAKING CAN COMPETE WITH HIS MOM'S
EXCITING
CONFESSIONS
I CAUGHT MY WIFE IN BED WITH MY 2 BEST FRIENDS
A RAPIST IS HIDING IN MY BASEMENT
I KIDNAPPED MY NEIGHBOR'S BABY
HE KILLED MY HUSBAND—THEN MADE ME LOVE HIM

'70s Style

Long-time readers of MCBF are no doubt familiar with my affection for confession magazines. You know, titles like TRUE CONFESSIONS and TRUE STORY with covers promising tales of woe like "I Belong In An Insane Asylum" or "My Lies Let a Serial Killer Go Free". The stories, of course, are completely fictious and follow a more or less rigid formula. Invariably told in the first person, they open with the heroine in some crisis, flashback to the origins, fast forward to a resolution and end with a generally sadder but wiser woman. The potential for exploitation is obvious. And with rates that even today are only in the 3¢ - 5¢/word range, the writing isn't Hemingway. But it is the ultimate in "brain disengaged" reading.

Sadly, this hardy genre (dating back to 1919) is slowly dying. Caught between romance paperbacks, trash TV and declining blue collar literacy, titles have disappeared and the survivors have become increasingly harder to find on the newsstands. Since MCBF #4, three titles have apparently vanished, leaving the field to MacFadden (big ones like TRUE CONFESSIONS) and Lexington Library (black ones ala BRONZE THRILLS).

It's now time for nostalgia. And my theory is that confession magazines peaked in terms of sick and twisted thrills in the '70s. The covers may have been better in the '40s and the ads in the '30s, but mark my words: moral standards and restraint went out the literary window in the '70s. It no longer was shocking for heroines to simply have non-marital sex. So were the readers, at least in thought. Confessions had to go farther. Thus, writers resorted to increasingly bizarre themes and predicaments to tickle their public's jaded palette. And, from our post-post modern vantage point, they succeeded. Forget taste. The trashiest trash is the best trash. And trash was the order of the day during the polyester decade.

Traditionally, one of the big disappointments in actually reading confession magazines is the stories not living up to the cover blurbs. They don't call them "teasers" for nothing, although the more extreme the blurb, the more extreme the story. But during the '70s, the stories themselves hit the publisher's wall of decency and good taste. They literally couldn't go any farther on the cover! You can't blurb a

sex-change story (a medical procedure hailed by confession hacks everywhere) "They Amputated My Penis".

You can sense the magazine's drift from their non-fiction features. Articles promise "A Pictorial Guide To Foreplay" or reveal "Why Sex Is So Special With Black Men". And the inevitable advice columns, instead of the usual on dealing with your ill-mannered toddler or slimy husband, offer tips on menage a trios and vaginal sprays.

But the main attraction is the stories. To put it bluntly, there were virtually no taboos. Take the story that hooked me years ago about a woman with a preschool daughter whom had an extremely large clitoris. Mama, mistaking it for a penis, was convinced her baby was some sort of hermaphrodite devil child until a kind, caring social worker set her straight. This is the kind of stuff I read confession magazines for.

In case you haven't guessed, the great thing about '70s confessions is the sex. It's not in every story, but it is in every issue. And when it's there, not only is there plenty of it, it's far more varied and explicit than anything before or since. The twin commandments of the '70s, "Get down tonight" and "If it feels good, do it" are combined in every possible permutation, only stopping short of outright pornography.

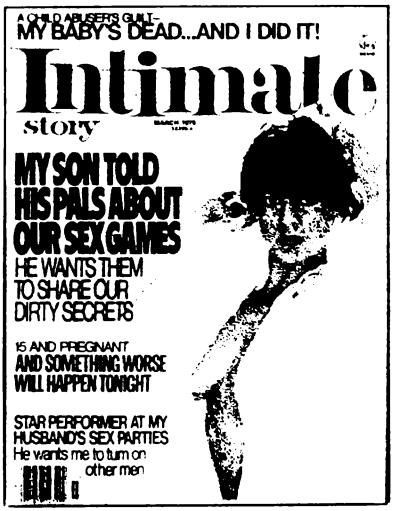
First, sex is not for just one boy and one girl anymore. "I Caught My Wife In Bed With My Two Best Friends" (EXCITING CONFESSIONS, 8/79) in more innocent times would have had a perfectly innocent and chaste excuse -- say an extreme shortage of beds coupled with extreme exhaustion. But this is the 1970s. Not only was the trio awake, they weren't playing auction pinochle. Or, as the husband put it, "A sexy wife, yes -- but not an alcoholic slut!". We won't even mention his affair.

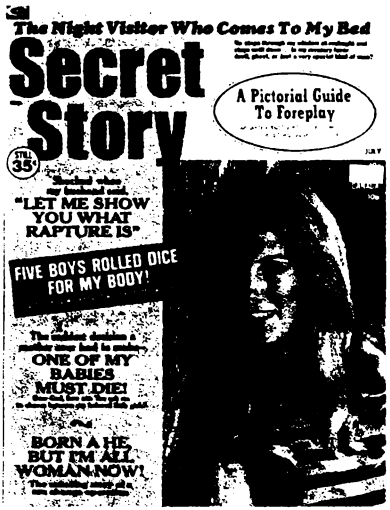
And on the opposite end of the spectrum, in terms of the number of participants, consider these poor women: "Starved For More Sex -- He Caught Me With My Orgasm Machine" (INTIMATE STORY ALBUM 8/79) or "My Husband Found My Porn Magazines" (PERSONAL ROMANCES 12/73). They're both exactly what you think. The former finds the heroine admitting "I must have used that vibrator five times a day." And the latter, the conflict is resolved by husband and wife enjoying their porn together. How '70s!

This atmosphere of experimentation extended to conventional relationships. The poor heroine of "I Made Love The Other Way" (PERSONAL ROMANCES, 7/76) found her brief, otherwise normal extramarital fling had left her an "oral sex fiend". Her dilemma is "I loved my husband, loved my family, and wanted the life I had. But I had fallen in love with something, not someone -- oral sex." Ah, the soul searing agony!

Of course, the hunt for the perfect orgasm does take some on previously uncharted paths. The heroine of "Your Sister Is My Other Man" (TRUE SECRETS 2/74) leaves her sexually inadequate husband for a fling with his sister, and winds up successfully begging her lesbian lover to "Oh please let me have an orgasm." The experience enables her to face up to her new (hetero) single life with optimism. Equally life-affirming is "Born A He But I'm All Woman Now" (SECRET STORY, 7/73). The happy transsexual, not bothering to confess her past, eagerly describes trying things out, admitting "Before we made love, I went to the bathroom and applied the lubricant other women make naturally."

Of course, confession magazines could not exist without a heroine redeeming for her sins through suffering. They just had to sin a whole lot more in order to merit their more severe just desserts. Rape is the favored punishment. In "My Son Told His Pals About Our Sex Games" (INTIMATE STORY 3/78), a recently widowed woman makes the mistake of making it with her teen stepson. Frequently. As he complained, "You're always so hot you can't leave me alone." And her chastisement comes in the form of one of Junior's little friends forcing some action for himself. In "Raped By A Sex-Crazed Trio" (INTIMATE STORY ALBUM, 8/79)


A CHILD ABUSER'S GUILT—
MY BABY'S DEAD...AND I DID IT!
Intimate
story
MY SON TOLD HIS PALS ABOUT OUR SEX GAMES
HE WANTS THEM TO SHARE OUR DIRTY SECRETS
15 AND PREGNANT AND SOMETHING WORSE WILL HAPPEN TONIGHT
STAR PERFORMER AT MY HUSBAND'S SEX PARTIES
He wants me to turn on other men


The Night Visitor Who Comes To My Bed
Secret Story
A Pictorial Guide To Foreplay
35¢
"LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT RAPTURE IS"
FIVE BOYS ROLLED DICE FOR MY BODY!
ONE OF MY BABIES MUST DIE!
BORN A HE, BUT I'M ALL WOMAN NOW!

the heroine makes the mistake of picking up strange guys at the local art museum for sex. Frequently. The penalty follows as advertised. But she's a hip chick. She realizes her punishment isn't for the sex, but for inviting strangers into her pad.

"15 And Pregnant And Something Worse Will Happen Tonight" (INTIMATE STORY 3/78) epitomizes '70s confessions; as if being 15 and pregnant isn't enough. But no, the poor thing gets shipped out to her aunt & uncle, the latter of whom informs her that "When I first saw you in those maternity clothes, I thought I'd go out of my head." And not with anger, either. The usual laws of God and Man are violated. She learns her lesson. She'll never be 15 and pregnant again.

But I must admit, of all the stories I've read for this article, the one that did the most for me was "Five Boys Rolled Dice For My Body" (SECRET STORY, 7/73). You don't get them this good in every issue, but you'll never get them in pre- or post '70s issues. Our heroine is a spoiled uptight cheerleader type who hasn't adapted to that groovy hippy thing that was de riguer in the early '70s. People complain how her "vibes are bad". She can't even get a rise out of the toad-like boy who worshipped her before he got his head together. So, she decides to seduce him by appealing to his chivalrous instincts. She offers her body as the prize in a dice game at a teen party, hoping he'll jealously rush to rescue her from the winner. No way, man. He let her groove on her own vibes man. She winds up losing her cherry in a big way. God, it's just too weird. How can anyone even think of this stuff, much less publish it?

There are also lots of other fun things about '70s confession magazines -- the incredibly poor copy editing, resulting in hysterically garbled text, the "posed by models" illustrations (in "5 Boys...", the "boys" look more like balding, middle aged truck stop lounge lizards), and the Mark Eden Bust Developer ads. The only downside of collecting '70s confession magazines is that they're fairly hard to find. They're not the sort of thing most people thought of saving, and dealers in second-had merchandise tend to think no one would want to buy them. But this latter fact does work to your advantage. When you do find them, they are almost always incredibly cheap, just like their stories. And if you stick to the second-string publishers like Curtis and Ideal, you can't go wrong.

I MADE LOVE THE "OTHER" WAY
I have the sex habit no one talks about
MY HUSBAND FOUND MY PORNO MAGAZINES
MY FATHER SOLD ME TO HIS FRIEND

READ HARD OR DIE

SENTENCED TO DIE by Stephen Gettinger (MacMillan, 1979)
****true crime****
An interesting take on the old to fry or not to fry controversy, with an evenhanded job of analyzing the various pro & con arguments -- deterrence, racism, insanity, and such -- surrounding capital punishment, complete with lots of great quotes. But the highlight of this book are the case summaries. Each issue is introduced and illustrated by a story about how some slob ended up on the Row: Highlight is Ronald O'Bryan, who poisoned his own kid's Halloween candy.

AMONG THE THUGS by Bill Buford (Norton, 1992)
****sports****
Three great things about this one. First, the author edits the fashionable litmag GRANTA, so it looks great in a cafe. Second, it's an up close & personal look at England's soccer hooligans -- an unbelievably uncivilized bunch that the author is calling them, quite justifiably, "little shits" by the end. And finally, the police end his research by knocking the crap out of him. This is even better than the time Paul Gallico climbed into the ring with Jack Dempsey.

HUSH LITTLE BABY by Jim Carrier (Pinnacle, 1992)
****true crime****
This one convinced me that every crime that has ever merited headlines, is destined to end up in a hack paperback original. Case in point: this book covers the Darci Pierce kidnap murder. What, you've never heard about how poor hysterically pregnant Darci kidnapped an expectant mother, forcibly performed a caesarean section on her with a car ignition key (pictured on the front cover!), and tried to pass the baby off as her own? You have to admire the nerve of the guy who wrote this. Yow!

WHERE THE KISSING NEVER STOPS by Ron Koertge (Dell, 1988)
****teen novel****
A real yawner of a coming of age novel wherein our up & coming hero finds himself all aquiver over his horrible secret. His mother feeds his fat little face from her earnings as a -- gasp! -- stripper! Not that this is a bad starting point, but the club is hopelessly upscale (never a sullied lap) and the protagonist excruciatingly dull. And it turns out everyone knew his dark secret all along. Ich.

ENGLAND'S DREAMING by Jon Savage (St. Martin's, 1992)
****punk rock****
The complete Sex Pistols/punk rock saga in excruciating (but never exhaustive) detail. Although at times Savage is literally reprinting his diary circa 1977, it's because his subject demands it. And not just the music -- Savage documents the entire political/social/economic/artistic/etc. milieu responsible, even avoiding London & England provincialism. Although it's thick (600 pgs), it'll replace a dozen crappy book on your shelves.

THE SLEEPING LADY by Robert Graysmith (Onyx, 1991)
****true crime****
Subject is serial killer Richard Carpenter, who killed at least 10 women on the trails around SF in the late '70s and early '80s. And it's every bit as good as author's earlier ZODIAC. Can you believe a crime writer these days devoting less than a quarter of a 400 page book to the trial? A healthy trend. FACTSHEET 5 fans should check out the frequent guest appearances of erstwhile columnist Shane Williams.

RAGE by Stephen King (as Richard Bachman) (1977)
****novel****
King may not be god, but he certainly is good. Away from his usual ghosts & ghoulies, he entertains quite well with this tale of a maladjusted adolescence. Teen with firearm takes over classroom, and a "Breakfast Club" style encounter session with teeth ensues. King has a better grasp of the underside of high school than most "serious" young adult novelists. Not one bit stupid.

MORRISSEY & MARR: THE SEVERED ALLIANCE by Johnny Rogan (Omnibus, 1992)
****rock 'n' roll****
It's time to settle a few issues. I am not related in any way to the Jeff Beck of "modern rock", I don't play guitar and he changed his name from Johnny Maher to avoid confusion with the Buzzcocks drummer. Other than that, this exhaustive unauthorized bio should only be of interest (albeit extreme) to serious Smiths/Mos fans. Fun facts: the pre-Smiths Morrissey saga takes up 90 pages; Maher only 25. Guess who's the boring one?

SECRETS OF A SMALL TOWN by Jerry Biederman (Dell, 1993)
****non-fiction****
Like any other breathing human being, Biederman is fascinated by other people's secrets. So he drove to a deliberately unidentified small town & sweet talked various anonymous, apparently ordinary folks into revealing their deepest and darkest. Some, you have to wonder. "Wishing my daughter would shave her legs"? "She had a large curd of cottage cheese on her nose"? Spoon River it's not. But there are enough rapes and molested children and other assorted sordidnes, along with the real oddballs -- the woman who was aroused by a mule at age 11, for instance -- to appeal to the gossip in us all.

JAY'S JOURNAL by Dr. Beatrice Sparks (Pocket, 1989)
****teen angst****
Sparks evidently made a career editing diaries of neurotic teenagers; she also "discovered the international bestseller GO ASK ALICE." Lightning seldom strikes twice; this is no ALICE. Jay, an allegedly brilliant teen, drifts into drugs and "O", as he likes to call the occult. Fitting in nicely with this issue's theme, he's Mormon for all the good it does keeping him out of the PCP. Lots of whiny teen angst, idiotic mood swings, and displays of occult power which would be impressive if witnessed by other than drug-addled adolescents. It's almost a relief when he "does it" with Daddy's gun.

THE TRUNK MURDERESS: WINNIE RUTH JUDD by Jana Bommersbach (Simon & Schuster, 1992)
****true crime****
You should know the story -- Winnie blows away chums, sticks 'em in her trunk (hacking one to fit), & gets fingered by the baggage clerk at the railroad station. Or at least that's how I first heard it. In keeping with the revisionist fad sweeping the nation, JB's out to prove Winnie had help, & does so pretty uncovincingly -- ok, maybe someone pitched in with a body saw. That aside, the book is a good account of the classic Arizon murder & was up for an Edgar, but rightfully lost to SWIFT JUSTICE.

GROWING UP BRADY by Barry Williams w/ Chris Kreski (Harper, 1992)
****TV camp/pap****
My twisted childhood was virtually sans TV save two shows: "Hogan's Heroes" and the Bunch. Go figure. Williams comes through here with a nice little tell-all account midway between the traditional rosy and acidic paths taken by exposes (ie, no regrets, no recommendations). He nonetheless makes Robert Reed sound like one of the most uptight assholes on the planet. A must.

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The readers write back and make previous MCBF topics look even more horrifying.

4 THE BLOODY WORLD OF MORMON CULTS

You live in a neighborhood of mixed religions -- snake-handlers next door, Hasidics across the street, Santerias down the block. Why the Mormons in the 'hood are the most likely to slit your throat.

8 FASTER MORMON! KILL! KILL!

A run-down on all the Mormons running around these days killing people and molesting children.

15 PLEASE MR. POSTMAN, 1993

May 6, 1993: the return of vengeful postal worker. They're starting to crack in pairs!

16 CENTERFOLD

A nifty little poster with a rhyme warning of the hazards of antipersonnel devices.

20 RANSOM KIDNAPPING OF CHILDREN: THE AMERICAN TOP 12

Small, compact, and readily transportable, pound for pound they're the most cost effective kidnapping targets. Even if they aren't named Lindbergh.

27 BIZARRE CONFESSIONS -- '70s STYLE

In the decade when all forms of taste went out the window, confession hacks up against the wall to come up with situations sufficiently extreme to out-do their reader's hedonistic lifestyles. And they did!

30 READ HARD OR DIE

If fine literature is the equivalent of gourmet food, here's the MSG I've been reading.